



# Vine & Branches Area Faith Community

[www.vineandbranchesafc.org](http://www.vineandbranchesafc.org)

December 17, 2023  
3rd Sunday of Advent

*I am the vine, you are  
the branches.  
Whoever remains in  
me and I in him will  
bear much fruit,  
because without me  
you can do nothing.  
John 15:5*

## Liturgies This Week

Mon Dec 18	<b>NO Mass</b> <i>Jeremiah 23:5-8; Matthew 1:18-25</i>
Tues Dec 19	(Spfld) <b>8:30am Mass</b> +Norbert Sturm, Rita & Jerome Windschitl <i>Judges 13:2-7, 24-25a; Luke 1:5-25</i>
Wed Dec 20	(Lamb) <b>8:00am Mass</b> +The Welsch Family <i>Isaiah 7:10-14; Luke 1:26-38</i>
Thur. Dec 21	(Sanb) <b>8:00am Mass</b> +Dorothy Geis <i>Song of Songs 2:8-14; Luke 1:39-45</i>
Fri. Dec 22	(Spfld) <b>8:30am Mass</b> –Barry & Karen Reindl Family <i>1 Samuel 1:24-28; Luke 1:46-56</i>
Sat. Dec 23	(Lamb) <b>4:00pm Mass</b> –For the People (Spfld) <b>5:30pm Mass</b> +Bill Vogel <i>Malachi 3:1-4, 23-24; Luke 1:57-66</i>
Sun. Dec 24	(Spfld) <b>8:30am Mass</b> +Madonna Hillesheim <i>2 Samuel 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16; Romans 16:25-27; Luke 1:26-38</i> (Spfld) <b>4:00pm Mass</b> +Gavin Ludewig (Lamb) <b>6:30pm Mass</b> +Kenneth & Esther Benedict <i>Isaiah 62:1-5; Acts of the Apostles 13:16-17, 22- 25; Matthew 1:1-25</i>

## Church of St. Raphael & Area Office

20 W Van Dusen Street ~ 507-723-4137  
Springfield MN 56087

Email: [straphael@newulmtel.net](mailto:straphael@newulmtel.net)

### Prayer Chain

Karen Brandl 507-920-6709

## Church of St. Joseph

400 W 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave, PO Box 458

Lamberton MN 56152

& St. Thomas Oratory, Sanborn MN

507-752-7269

Email [stjoseph@centurylink.net](mailto:stjoseph@centurylink.net)

Prayer Chain— Sue Imker 507-829-1846

St. Joseph Secretary—Sue Imker

### Pastor

Fr. Jeremy Kucera Phone: 507-828-5247

[fatherjeremykucera@gmail.com](mailto:fatherjeremykucera@gmail.com)

### Deacon

Dcn. Barry Reindl Phone: 723-5952

[barkmr7@gmail.com](mailto:barkmr7@gmail.com)

### Parish Secretary

Raquel Kieper 723-4137

[straphael@newulmtel.net](mailto:straphael@newulmtel.net)

### Parish Bookkeeper

Connie Vogel 723-4138

[cvogel@newulmtel.net](mailto:cvogel@newulmtel.net)

### Faith Formation/Youth Ministry

Karen Reindl

[mrsreindl@straphaelpk-6.com](mailto:mrsreindl@straphaelpk-6.com)

### School Principal

Beth Steffl 723-4136

[mrssteffl@straphaelpk-6.com](mailto:mrssteffl@straphaelpk-6.com)

### School Secretary

Trisha Ludewig 723-4135

[straysschooloffice@newulmtel.net](mailto:straysschooloffice@newulmtel.net)

### Sacrament of Reconciliation

✠ Saturday 4:30—5:15pm at St. Raphael

✠ Wednesday 7:15-7:45am at St. Joseph

#### ◆ Prayer Chain

507-920-6709, 507-441-1049, 507-227-6606

#### ◆ Good Neighbor Thrift Store 723-5778

20 E. Central, Springfield, MN

#### ◆ Office of Catholic Charities 866-670-5163

**Baptism:** Pre-baptism classes required - Contact AFC Office

**Suggested Stipend for Sacrament of Baptism—\$25.00**

**Marriage:** All Catholics are to contact the parish and pastor at least 6 months before their wedding.

► **Mass Stipend \$10.00**

► **Bulletin Deadline:** Wednesday at 1:00pm

The Mission of the Vine & Branches Area Faith Community empowered by the Holy Spirit is to bear fruit that will last as Jesus commanded: by celebrating and proclaiming our Catholic faith as disciples of Jesus using our God-given gifts; by reaching out to and welcoming all people; and by centering our lives on the Eucharist, sacraments, scripture, service and the teaching of the Church.

Hello everyone,

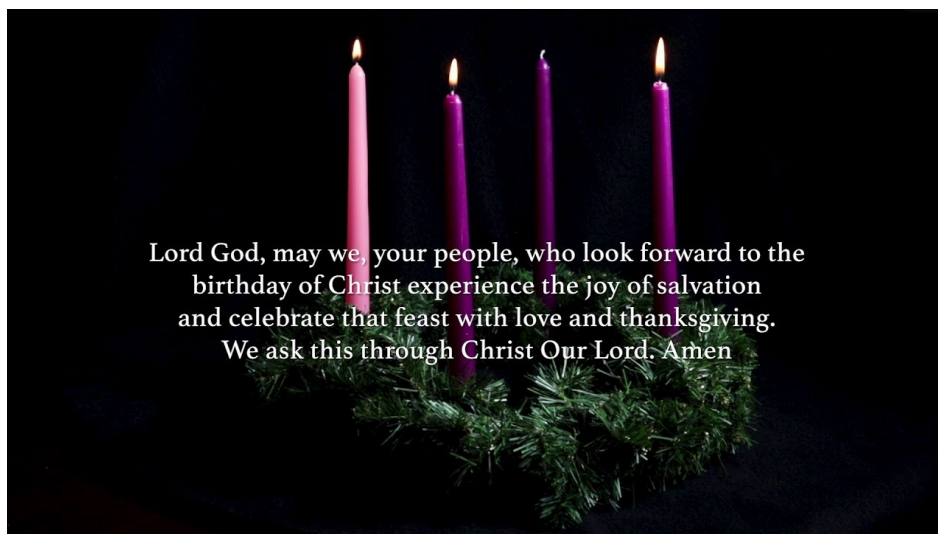
I pray that your Advent is going well as we continue to receive this season of awaiting Jesus's return and preparing ourselves to not only receive him when he comes back to Earth but continue our journey of redemption and receiving him within right now. Just a reminder that on Sunday evening, December 17<sup>th</sup>, there will be a few priests joining me to hear confessions starting at 7 p.m. at St. Raphael's. It will be a time with Eucharistic adoration while confessions are being heard and some light music in the background. If it's been a long time since you've gone to confession, don't wait any longer, please. Don't be afraid to be embraced by the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The ever loving and merciful Lord always extends forgiveness, peace, and renewal to the repentant heart. If you've forgotten how to go to confession don't worry about it. Just come and the priest will help you out.

Thank you very much to everyone who has helped Fr. Patrick Chongo's mother this past week. I pray that her amputation surgery goes well and I will keep you posted. We're sending your mass intentions to father.

I'd like to encourage all of you to take a little extra time leading up to Christmas and see if you can find an extra 15 minutes in the morning before your days begin, to just be with the Lord in silence and maybe a good cup of coffee or hot chocolate. Since this is a time of preparing to receive him not only in the future, but right now, maybe we can take that extra 15 minutes to ask the Holy Spirit to show us the places where we aren't willing or able to receive him (those closed portions of our minds, hearts, and souls). At the same time, I pray that we'll be able to go a little deeper and see why we've closed those places off and bring that to Jesus every time we receive his forgiveness and mercy in confession and when we receive him in Holy Communion where a deeper healing can really take place.

God bless you all,

Fr. Jeremy



# ~Church of St. Joseph~

## Meetings and Activities

Dec 17	10:30am	Mass
	11:30am	Christmas Program—grades 1-5
Dec 18	7:00pm	CCW Meeting
Dec 20	8:00am	Mass
	6:30-7:30pm	Faith Formation Class grade 1-11
Dec 21	8:00am	Mass—St. Thomas
Dec 23	4:00pm	Mass
Dec 24	6:30pm	Mass

This week we remember *these* people in our prayers.  
*Jim & Sue Imker and Holly Jaeger*

**Our Shepherd of the field:**

*Father Jeffrey Horejsi*



~Please also pray for those in need ~

Bruce Olson      Mary Arnoldi      Pat Dauer  
Brett Baumann      Linda Riley      Bob Peterson  
Marcie Anderson

## December 23 Ministries

**Lector** Cathy Graff  
**EMC** Teresa Wenisch  
**Servers** Sydney Vogel & Otto Hubert  
**Sacristan** Diane Arnsdorf  
**Ushers** Jason Axford & Gordy Wille  
**Gift Bearers** Jared Wenisch Family  
**Money Counters** Kylie Jenniges & Cathy Graff

## December 24 Ministries

**Lector** Brenda Derickson  
**EMC** Emily Scheffler  
**Servers** Celia Vogel & Lou Vogel  
**Sacristan** Cathy Graff  
**Ushers** Jim Imker & Tom Anderson  
**Gift Bearers** Marg & Larry Weber  
**Money Counters** Teresa Wenisch & Katy Wille

## St. Joseph Contribution Budget July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024

	Annual Budget	Budget to Date	Received to Date
<b>Adults</b>	62,000.00	\$28,615.44	<b>\$26,210.10</b>
<b>Student</b>	\$250.00	\$115.44	<b>\$152.00</b>
<b>Loose Plate</b>	\$2,500.00	\$1,153.92	<b>\$1,566.65</b>

## Last Week's Parish Revenue-St. Joseph

Adult Envelope	\$1,250.00
Student Envelope	\$19.00
Loose Plate	\$103.00
Christmas Flowers	\$85.00
Immaculate Conception	\$10.00
Seminarian Collection	\$136.00
Religious Retirement	\$145.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,748.00</b>

## Weekly Faith Formation Schedule

**Wednesday, December 20**

6:30-7:30pm—Faith Formation Classes grades 1-11

**The second collection today** (December 17) will be for the Sisters of Mary Morning Star.

**Our elementary religion students** will be presenting their Christmas program after Mass today. Please stay and support our young people. You are also invited downstairs for lunch and socializing following the program.

**St. Joseph's CCW** will meet Monday, December 18th at 7:00 in the church basement. Please bring items for the Revere Home residents. All women of the parish are encouraged to attend.

**We are in need of someone to bring Eucharist** to Valley View Manor on the second, third, and fourth weeks of the month (the first week Father has Mass at VVM). If you could do this, please contact Sue at 507-829-1846.

Thank you




# ~Church of St. Raphael~

Contribution Budget July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024			
	Annual Budget	Budget to Date	Received to Date
Adults	\$335,000.00	\$154,615.44	<b>\$144,556.14</b>
Gr. 7-12	\$1,100.00	\$507.84	<b>\$0.00</b>
Pre K-6	\$1,100.00	\$507.84	<b>\$0.00</b>

## The 400 Club Winners this Week

#92	Dr. Julie Beyer	\$65.00
#253	John Ryan	\$65.00

~ Serving next Funeral will be Group C~




The end of the year is not far away, and it is time to start thinking of strategies to maximize the tax benefits of year-end giving. Federal tax laws and many state laws make it possible to reduce or eliminate taxes on gifts to charities like your parish, diocese, schools and other ministries. Remember that only gifts made by December 31st can help reduce the amount of taxes you owe next April. Please consult **your professional tax advisor for tax strategies for your personal situation.**

**Securities & Appreciated Assets**  
 Gifts of stock, bonds, mutual funds, and certain other property that have increased in value can result in even greater tax savings than gifts of cash. If you have owned such investments for longer than one year you can generally donate them to your parish and deduct their full current value, even if it far exceeds your original cost.

Congress has provided that in addition to regular tax savings, you also do not have to pay capital gains tax when these assets are given to a qualifying charity. This "extra" tax savings is another reason why some choose to make their gifts this way.

Last week's Parish Revenue	
Adult Envelopes	\$16,588.00
Loose Plate	\$456.00
Immaculate Conception	\$115.00
Christmas	\$200.00
Retirement Fund	\$220.00
Seminarian Fund Collection	\$451.00
Christmas Flowers	\$200.00
Coffee Connections	\$16.00
Good Neighbor Thrift Store	\$854.99
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$19,100.99</b>



**We would like to welcome** David and Marlene Kosel to St. Raphael Parish Community. We are happy to welcome you to our parish family.

December 23 & 24, 2023				December 25, 2023	
	Dec 23 5:30pm	Dec 24 8:30am	Dec 24 4:00pm		9:30am
<b>Servers</b>	Andrew Reindl	<b>VOLUNTEER</b>	Cole Jensen	<b>Servers</b>	Kallen Riederer
	TJ Reindl	Paul Goedtke	Paul Goedtke		Zoie Riederer
<b>Lector</b>	Jack Hartjes	John Ryan	Matt Hillesheim	<b>Lector</b>	Jim Miesen
<b>EMHC</b>	Jack Hartjes	Dcn Barry Reindl	Dcn Barry Reindl	<b>EMHC</b>	Donna Krueger
<b>Accompanist</b>	Julie Prechel	Kathleen Goedtke	Kathleen Goedtke	<b>Accompanist</b>	Julie Prechel
<b>Song Leader</b>	Julie Prechel	<b>TBA</b>	Adult Choir	<b>Song Leader</b>	TBA
<b>Rosary</b>	<b>VOLUNTEER</b>	<b>VOLUNTEER</b>	<b>VOLUNTEER</b>	<b>Rosary</b>	<b>VOLUNTEER</b>
<b>Head Usher</b>	<b>VOLUNTEER</b>	<b>VOLUNTEER</b>	Steve Woidylla	<b>Head Usher</b>	Keith Riederer
	<b>VOLUNTEER</b>	<b>VOLUNTEER</b>	Donna Woidylla		Jill Riederer
	<b>VOLUNTEER</b>	<b>VOLUNTEER</b>	Steve Meine		<b>VOLUNTEER</b>
	<b>VOLUNTEER</b>	<b>VOLUNTEER</b>	Mike Rothmeier		<b>VOLUNTEER</b>
<b>Videographer</b>	Jada Reese			<b>Videographer</b>	Noah Riederer

# ~Church of St. Raphael~

## Meetings & Activities

Dec 17	8:30am	Mass
		Coffee Connection
	7:00pm	Adoration and Confession
Dec 19	8:30am	School Mass
	4:00-5:30pm	Atrium
Dec 20	5:00-6:00pm	Children's Choir Practice
	6:00-7:00pm	Faith Formation Classes grades 1-6
	6:00-7:00pm	Praise & Worship Choir Practice
	7:15-8:15pm	Faith Formation Classes grades 7-10
	8:15pm	Youth Group grades 9-12
Dec 22	6:30-7:30am	That Man is You
	8:30am	Mass
		<b>NO SCHOOL</b>
		<b>PARISH OFFICE CLOSED</b>
Dec 23	5:30pm	Mass
Dec 24	8:30am	Mass
	4:00pm	Mass
Dec 25	9:30am	Mass

*Please remember in your prayers:*

✠ Our Shepherd of the Field:

*Father Steven Verhelst*

*Please pray for our parishioners this week~*

Sun: Cody & Samantha Oeltjenbruns Family

Mon: John Olcott & Katie Dauer

Tues: Dan & Shelley Olson

Wed: Timothy & Sarah Olson Family

Thur: Ralph & Karen Pabst

Fri: Gregory Pankratz

Sat: Rosemary Pankratz

*Weekly Candle Intentions* (\$5.00 offering)

Special Intentions Special Intention DGF

✠Small Votive Candles are now \$1.00 each

✠Large Intention Candles are now \$5.00 each



### Check out Channel 8—Cablecast

\* **St. Raphael Sunday Mass**

Every Tuesday at 5:00 pm & Friday at 5:00 pm

\***The Future Depends of Love—Episode 12**

Every Tuesday at 11:00am & Thursday at 7:00pm

To view the Mass videos online, visit our YouTube channel and subscribe.



<https://www.youtube.com> and search for St. Raphael Catholic Church. You will see a picture of our church.



Please remember in your prayers *Shirley Juenemann*, mother of Maureen Miesen, who recently passed away. We extend our prayers and sympathy to her family and friends. Eternal rest grant unto her, O Lord.

## ~Good Neighbor Thrift ~

Monday-Friday 9:30am-4:00pm

Saturday 9:00am-12:00pm

**December 18-23**

**50% off Christmas Décor & Toys**

Now accepting Fall/Winter Clothing Donations

**On Sunday, December 17, 2023, at 7:00pm**, there will be 4 priests at St. Raphael for Adoration and to hear confessions. Parishioners from St. Raphael and St. Joseph are invited to attend.

**Each Sunday during Advent, we will have a 2nd Collection.** The collected donations will go as follows:

Week 3—Sisters of Mary Morning Star

Week 4—Youth Ministry Outreach to Teens



**Congratulations to Scarlett Zihlke**, daughter of Christopher & Cadene Zihlke, as she recently received the Sacrament of Baptism and was welcomed into the Holy Catholic Church and the St. Raphael Parish Community!

**Father Jeremy's friend, Father Patrick Chongo**, a priest from Zambia, has a special request. His mother is having her second amputation soon and he is looking to raise funds to help cover the cost of her operation and hospital stay. Father Patrick is a religious order priest and therefore is not paid a salary. To help cover the cost he is wondering if anyone would have some Mass intentions that they would like offered by him where he resides in Ottawa so he could put the money from the stipend toward his mother's medical expenses. If you would like masses offered for a loved one by Fr. Patrick, please contact Father Jeremy or the Parish Office.



# ~St. Raphael School~

*It is the mission of St. Raphael Catholic School to bring students to a deeper relationship with Jesus while providing excellent education.*

Greetings!

**Advent Service Project:** St. Raphael Catholic School is teaming up with Catholic United Financial to help our Springfield Area Food Shelf. We have received a Grant For Good for \$500 in which to purchase food for our area food shelf. Some of our students will be shopping for food with this grant and then some of our students will help stock the shelves at the food shelf. All families are encouraged to bring other donations of dry, canned, or jarred goods during the Advent season. Students and staff have been gathering around the Advent wreath for a devotion each Monday in December along with our service project.

**Upcoming School Masses:** Please join us for school Masses at 8:30a.m.

Friday January 5: Grade 4 leads

No Mass January 12th or 19th (Father is away)

Friday January 26: Staff Mass

**Catholic Schools Week Mass Sunday January 28 @ 10:30 a.m. followed by our Build your Own Burger meal**

**Thanks Marie!** Thank you to Marie Gervais who worked for many tireless weeks and months to make and sell her apple pies and crisps! All the profit from these has gone directly to the school's general budget! All the pies and crisps have been sold and she has no more apples left! We appreciate you, Marie!

**Christmas For Kids:** Our St. Raphael first graders were interviewed this week by KNUJ's Craig Hansen. He produces a radio spot every year where he goes around to local schools and interviews their students about Christmas. It is called "Christmas for Kids" and is always a delight! **Our students will be on the air on Tuesday December 19th at 3:35 p.m. Listen on KNUJ and SAM 107.3!** It will also be available to listen to online on their website after it has been on the air!

**Christmas Writings in the Advance-Press:** Our students have completed their annual Christmas writings for the newspaper and they will be featured in the upcoming Christmas issue! Take a look and see what our students have to say!

Blessings,

*Mrs. Beth Steffl*

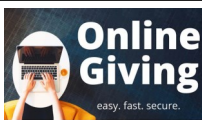
## School Office Hours

Monday-Friday 7:30am—3:30pm

Hours may vary if school is closed. Please watch bulletin for notices.

Reminder:  
No School!

There will be **NO school at St. Raphael** December 22, 2023—January 1, 2024 for Christmas Break. Classes will resume on Tuesday, January 2, 2024.



We have an online giving link for Alumni Contributions for St. Raphael School! Please use this link when making your donation:

<https://vineandbranchesafc.churchgiving.com/>



## St Raphael School Advent Service Project For Springfield Area Food Shelf

Monday, December 18, 2023

10:00 am St. Raphael Auditorium

This event is made possible by a grant from Catholic United Financial and St. Boniface Catholic United Financial Volunteer Team

Catholic United is a member-owned, not-for-profit financial services company, connecting people of faith, protecting their future and generously impacting parishes, schools and communities.



Senior Sales Representative  
David Schonhardt, FICP  
Call or Text (763) 670-9058  
d.schonhardt@catholicunited.org  
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## ~Youth & Adult Faith Formation ~

This week, December 20, will be the last class for the month and 2023! This is an interesting year in that the 4<sup>th</sup> week of Advent lasts only one day!

Teens will meet in the gym for to listen to Gabrielle and Henry Starkie who will be talking to us about “What is Community.”

Following teen classes we will have Youth Group for grades 9-12.

As the Advent season continues I pray that you are blessed by gatherings with loved ones and time for silence to prepare for the Newborn King of Kings!

~Mrs. Karen Reindl

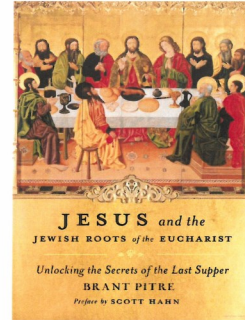
### Weekly Faith Formation Schedule

#### **Wednesday, December 20**

6:00-7:00pm Faith Formation Classes grades 1-6

7:15-8:15pm Faith Formation Classes grades 7-10

After Class Youth Group for grades 9-12



Join us for this 8-part BOOK discussion

Books are free thanks to a generous donor!

Register and receive your free book by contacting Karen Reindl at [mrsreindl@straphaelpk-6.com](mailto:mrsreindl@straphaelpk-6.com)

We will discuss the introduction and Chapter 1

Sunday, January 7, 2024

at 6:30pm

in the Holy Family Room

The next gathering will be decided upon January 7.

### Youth Choir Schedule

#### **Wednesday, December 20**

5:00-6:00pm Children's Choir Practice

6:00-7:00pm Praise & Worship Choir Practice

### Week 4 HEALING

**REFLECTION:** Sometimes our lives can feel like a rollercoaster, filled with high and low moments. As much as we strive to enjoy the positive moments, we know that they come and go and even if we do our best to avoid the low moments we know they are inevitable. We experience traumatic and dark moments that can leave us with lasting wounds and scars. But Jesus offers us healing.



He spent a significant amount of time healing those who were broken and wounded. Jesus healed others to point out his redemptive mission. His healing was not just for back then but for all time....Jesus still heals. Are we humble enough to bring our wounds to Him?

We must first ask for healing in prayer. After that, we have to identify what kind of healing we need; counseling, rehabilitation, or therapy may be necessary steps on our journey. Healing sometimes requires reconciliation with people who we have hurt, or who have hurt us. This sacrament provides us with yet another way to seek Christ's healing, for through them He “touches” us just like he touched the eyes of a blind man.

**PRAYER:** Jesus, you healed many people and still desire to heal us and make us whole. I offer you my wounds and the places where I am broken. Help me never succumb to a bitter sense of injustice or loneliness. In your mercy, hear my prayer and send the Holy Spirit to provide me with courage so I may seek help from others. Lord Jesus, heal me. Amen

**CHALLENGE:** Spend time today to identify an area that is wounded or broken and the next steps you need to take to find healing. Then take 15-30 minutes in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament if possible, asking Jesus for healing and the courage to take those next steps.

\*If you need to find healing from past hurts, reach out to your local parish or diocesan office and ask for a list of Catholic mental health professionals whom you can connect with.

~Upcoming Area Events~



## HOLIDAY LIGHTING CONTEST

Do you think your house has the best Holiday light display?

**The Springfield Chamber of Commerce has nominated the residents of St. John's Circle of Care to be the judge of that!**


**Judging will take place on Tuesday, December 19th Starting at 6:30 pm**

Please make sure your lights are turned on the evening of December 19th

*\*Eligible homes must be within city limits*



**1st place prize:**  
**\$50 Chamber Bucks**



**2nd place prize:**  
**\$30 Chamber Bucks**



**3rd place prize:**  
**\$20 Chamber Bucks**




### *Sparkle and Dine*

*7<sup>th</sup> Annual Women's event held at the Springfield Community Center February 12<sup>th</sup>, 2024*

Enjoy Beautiful Theme Tables, a Catered Meal & Fellowship with other Women!  
*You will Be Inspired by our Speaker Amanda DeYounge from Nisswa, MN*

**We are looking for women that will volunteer to host and decorate a table for 8.**

Invite your friends.  
Use your imagination and creativity to decorate a table...  
..God gave us lots of talent!





Proceeds will go towards the NUMAS Haus, a women's shelter dedicated to helping women and their families get back to independent living. They provide housing, classes and other support to aide in long-term stability.



**Interested in hosting? Contact:**  
 Crystal Dauer 612-910-4931  
 Alice Johnson 763-645-2873  
 Vicki Roiger 507-822-1504

**Deadline: January 22nd, 2024**

Did you know we have an **Electronic Contribution Form** you fill out and turn into the Parish Office if you would like to schedule regular withdrawals from your account? They can be found at the church entrances or printed off from our website at: <https://www.vineandbranchesafc.org/stewardship-1/>

**Springfield Area Food Shelf** is open Tuesday evenings 5:00-7:00 PM and Thursday mornings 9:30-11:30 AM. We are looking for volunteers to help with various jobs - call Shari Koll at 507-227-0386 to volunteer. Please consider making a donation to the food shelf this Christmas season. Springfield Area Food Shelf, PO Box 15, Springfield, MN 56087.

## Flowers for Christmas

You are welcome to make a donation for our Christmas environment in memory of or in honor of a loved one. Please complete the form below and return it in the collection basket or parish office.

St. Raphael
  St. Joseph

**In memory of:**
(or)
 **In honor of:**

**Please Print**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Given By: \_\_\_\_\_ Amount: \_\_\_\_\_

